

THE  
Dangerous *Imposture*  
OF  
QUAKERISM,

Represented in a Letter to a Friend.

S I R,  
**H**AVING lately read *George Fox's Journal*, I  
send you the Observations I made concerning  
*The Dangerous Imposture of Quakerism*: And that  
which I am to acquaint you with upon this  
Subject, may be divided into what relates to its *Real Au-*  
*thor and Doctrine*, or to its pretended *Original and Proof*.

I. The *Real Author* of this *Imposture* was *George Fox*: and  
'tis worth our taking Notice of, what his true Character  
was. He was, when he began to publish his Doctrine, a  
*Young Man*, who had had a Religious Education, and in the  
Nineteenth and Twentieth Years of his Age, was exer-  
cised with strong Temptations to *Despair*, and was un-  
der great Troubles and Disorders of Mind on that account,  
such as could not be removed by those Ministers that he  
had recourse unto.

Upon this, he betook himself to Retirement and *Soli-*  
*tude*, Night and Day, to much Fasting, Reservedness,  
and Melancholy, and estranging himself from Society,

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went

Went alone into *Solitary Places* with his Bible, and his own Thoughts.

By degrees, he imagined that God made known his Will to him; and *opened to him* ( as his Phrase is ) that the *Light of Christ within Man*, was to be his Instructor and Guide in Matters of Religion. And through this Imagination, he sometimes gain'd Comfort and Joy; and by degrees arrived at extreme Presumption and Confidence.

When he affirmed, That *Christ* was in *him*, he did not mean that the *Man Jesus* of *Nazareth* was in him; but that the same Divinity that is called the *Word* and the *Light*, ( *John* 1. 1---7---13. ) which was in *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, was also (though not in the same measure) in *George Fox*. But the *Word* and the *Light* is the same Divinity, as all Orthodox Christians mean by the *Second Person in the Blessed Trinity*, ( *1 John* 5. 7. ) His *Fundamental Doctrine* then was this, That the *Second Person* in the *Blessed Trinity*, dwells as truly in every *Quaker*, though not as much as he did in *Jesus* of *Nazareth*. But although the *Third Person* in the *Trinity*, viz. the *Holy Ghost* dwells in other Men, yet the *Word* or *Son* ( i. e. the *Second Person* in the *Trinity* ) never did dwell in any Man, but in the *Man Jesus* of *Nazareth* only, who was the *Christ of God*, as in him the *Word* was made *Flesh*, ( *John* 1. 14. ) or the *Son of God* was *Incarnate*, and who is over all, God blessed for ever, ( *Rom.* 9. 5. )

But, for *George Fox* to affirm, that *Christ* was in *him*, is an excess of Error and Profaneness, such as no sober Christian, who knows, that by this his *Blessed Saviour* is distinguished from, and exalted above the highest Angels, can endure to hear without the utmost Abhorrence and Abomination.

This is the *Fundamental Error* and *Prodigious Delusion* that the Author of *Quakerism* entertain'd and set up in the World, and this his Followers defend and maintain to this day.

When he communicated his Notions to others, and at their *Convincement* ( as he speaks ) great *Horror and Trembling* fell upon them; Insomuch, that some of the Company

pany affirm'd, that not only the Persons, <sup>1089</sup> but also the Church it self ( in which they sometimes were ) did shake, and they were afraid it should fall upon their Heads.

The *Extravagancy* of the Discourses and Actions of this Person, is manifest in his Life. Upon the consideration of which, together with the preternatural Effects his Addresses had upon his Converts, I made these *Questions*, ( 1. ) Whether there were fuller evidence that *Oliver's Porter* in *Bedlam* was a Madman, than that *George Fox* was so? And ( 2. ) Whether ( setting aside the Testimony of the Evangelists, who say that *Demoniacs* were brought to our Saviour to be cured ) it be more manifest from their Words and Actions, that those Persons were possessed with the Devil, than that *George Fox*, and other *Primitive Quakers*, were such possess'd Persons?

Now, every one knows that a *Quaker* receives the absurd Doctrines, and imitates the melancholy behaviour of *George Fox*, who was the real *Author*, and the Original Pattern of this Religious Madness.

II. The Doctrines of *Quakerism* may be distinguished into what is *Pernicious*, and what is *Trifling*.

First, The *Pernicious* Doctrines of *Quakerism* are so, with respect to *Human Society*, or to *Christian Religion*.

I. The Doctrines of *Quakerism* which are *Pernicious* to *Human Society*, are these,

( 1. ) The denying the lawfulness of an Oath, even in Courts of Judicature: An Oath being the highest Assurance one Man can give another of his Veracity; and the Cases in which an Oath is demanded, being such, wherein the highest Assurance is reasonable, because the Estates and Lives of Men are in Question. But this Doctrine of *Quakerism* destroys this Security, under pretence that every Oath is a gross Sin.

( 2. ) The denying outward Respect of Persons ( such as putting off the Hat in the presence of Superiors, is among us ) weakens the Reverence that the greatest part of Men ought to have towards those in Authority, which Reverence cannot ( according to the Opinion of

all Nations ) otherwise be preserved in the *Vulgar*, than by visible Marks of Distinction and Distance. But, such *Formalities* requisite to Government, the Quakers deny, under pretence that 'tis their necessary Duty so to do; and that *they* have received a greater Honour from God than this which their Superiors require from them.

(3.) The denying the Lawfulness of *Fighting* ( or the use of the *Carnal Weapon* ) for Private or Publick necessary Defence, is a Doctrine which ( so far as it is received ) weakens a Nation, and renders the *Protection* of Right, impossible, against those who shall by open War, or private Violence, invade it. And did not the *Quakers* receive *Protection* through the Labours, and Sufferings, and Blood of others, they would soon be made sensible ( when too late ) of the *pernicious* Nature of this Error.

These Doctrines of the *Quakers* are *Pernicious* to *Human Society*; and therefore ought not to be received, or encouraged by any who love their Rights, their Liberty, and their Country.

2. Besides these, there are other Errors *pernicious* to the *Christian Religion*; and they are such as these:—

(1.) The denying the use of the Two *Sacraments*, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, by which Christians are distinguished from Infidels, and obliged to live according to the Holy Laws of their Religion. The *Son of God* judg'd it expedient to establish these *Sensible Rites* for Religious Purposes, to be used by Men who *must* live by Sense; but the *Quakers* deny the Obligation, Use, and Benefit of them.

(2.) Another Doctrine *pernicious* to *Christian Religion*, is, the denying and vilifying a *Learned Ministry* as unnecessary and unlawful; whereas it is not possible rightly to understand the Doctrine of God delivered in the Language of Men, without that *Learning* which is necessary to the understanding of that Language; and such necessary Learning is very *much more* than an unlearned Man ( such as *George Fox* was ) can be aware of. Add to this ( and in Order to the Subverting of a Learned Ministry ) their forbidding the payment of *Tythes*, as if so doing  
were

were denying of Christ. By this means, they rob the Ministers of that maintenance which the Laws of the Land have provided for those who spend their whole time in the Study and Teaching of Religion; calling such *Learned and Godly Ministers of Christ*, by the opprobrious Name of *Hirelings*; though *Christ* himself said, Luke 7. 10. *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; and though the Laws of *England* give every Incumbent as good a Title to his Tythes, as any Landlord hath to his Rent, or to his Estate.

(3.) Again, the *Quakers* deny the Sufficiency of the *Holy Scriptures*, and pretend that no Man can understand them, unless he hath the *same Spirit* by which the Doctrine of the Scriptures was given forth. Nor will they (that I can find) allow any one to be in that Spirit which is necessary to the understanding of the Scriptures, who is not a *Quaker*. This is to affirm, That God has so spoken in the *Scriptures*, (which contain his Revelation) as no Man can (without a repeated Revelation) understand what he has spoken in them; and that the *Quakers* only have this Privilege. This Doctrine is manifestly pernicious to the *Christian Religion*, whereby Arbitrary *Enthusiasm* is set up for the Interpreter of the written Word of God, and Rule of Religion.

And now I appeal to any Reasonable Man, whether the Doctrines aforesaid be not Pernicious to Human Society, and to Christian Religion? I appeal to George Fox's *Journal*, whether these be not Doctrines of *Quakerism*?

2dly. Besides these Pernicious Doctrines, there are others which are *Trifling*; such as these,

(1.) Their making it a kind of Religious Duty, to say *Thou* and *Thee* to a single Person, and pretending it unlawful to say *You* to such an one; which, at worst were but an Impropriety of Speech. But if *Custom* be the only Rule of Language, as certainly 'tis; then is *You* (in Conversation) good and lawful *English* when used to a single Person, or to many; though *Thou* be only the Singular Number, and *Ye* be only the Plural; whereas *You* is both Singular and Plural; but to make Religion of this, is *Trifling*.

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(2.) Again, to adhere Religiously to the particular *English* words, *Yes* and *Nay*, is another weakness, when *Yes* and *No* are as good *English*, and more commonly used.

To these *Doctrines* which are *Trifling*, we may add,

(1.) Their peculiar *Custom* of *Marriages* and *Burials*; their unreasonable *Opposition* to the *Form* and *Manner* of *Solemnization* of *Marriage*, established by *Law*, as a distinguishing *Separation* from other *Christians*, who universally (on such occasions) have the *Solemn Prayers* and *Benediction* of the *Ministers* of *Christ*. Their refusing to *Bury* their *Dead* in any place but by themselves; as if they would extend the *Marks* of their *Religious* *Delusion* beyond their *Lives*.

(2.) Their refusing to wear *Lace* and *Light Colours*, as undoubted marks of *Pride* in the *World's Children*, (i. e. other *Christians*) and at the same time to allow of *Flower'd Silks*, and richer *Velvet*, in *Friends*, (i. e. *Quakers*) though of mean *Condition*: is more truly the part of *Shameless Impudence*, than of *Christian Gravity*. And the *Green Apron* is almost as singular, as the *Reason* I am told has been given from it, viz. that *Adam* and *Eve* wore *Green Aprons*. By these *Doctrines* and *Customs*, the *Quakers* are distinguished; and of these *Doctrines* *George Fox* was the *Author*.

III. The pretended *Original* of these *Doctrines* *George* said was *Divine*, and that *God* opened these things to him, by the *Word of the Lord* that came unto him; and that *God* sent him to Teach these *Doctrines*, the *Fundamentals* of which are, That the *Light of Christ* is that which every *Man* ought to be taught by, and that so far as *Men* are not enlightened by this, the *Scripture* is a *dead Letter* unto them. He that can believe such a *Man* as *George Fox*, (who never had any learned *Education*, nor had lived long enough for such an *Education*, when he began to entertain and publish these *Opinions*; who by the disorders of *Temptation*, and near approaches to *Despair*, wanted the true and free use of his *Reason*; and accordingly

ingly discours'd more like a *Religious Madman*, than a Prophet or Apostle; who had no other Teacher of this Doctrine, but his own disturbed Imagination (as is evident, by the Folly and Confusion of all his Discourses); I say he, who can believe such a Man as this to be *taught of God*, meerly because he says it, one would think, had as little use of Reason, as *George* had, when he became the *first Quaker*. No sensible Man can relish such Discourses as those of *George Fox*, (in which he uses the Holy Scriptures as a *Phrase Book*; and (in a Sense never design'd by those Words, delivers his own Doctrines) unless he lays aside the use of *Reason* in Matters of *Religion*; without the use of which, 'tis impossible there should be any such thing as Religion among Men. But this may be excused in a *Quaker*, whose *Religion* indeed is but the *Speetre* of Religion murdered by *Ignorance* and *Enthusiasm*.

I confess I have so much regard to Sense and *Reason* and so honourable a persuasion of *God* and his *Wisdom*, that there is no Proof sufficient to convince me, that *God* spake by *such* a man as this. But,

IV. There is *Proof* which he pretends to, and that no less than (1.) Voices; and (2.) Visions; and (3.) Prophecy; and (4.) Miracles; and (5.) Discerning of Spirits; and (6.) The knowledge of Nature, and the whole Creation; and (7.) Being in the same State that *Adam* was before the Fall; which are more than ever any Prophet or Apostle attained to.

To which add (for a colour) first; the *Sufferings* of *George Fox*, which I confess were very great, (as he says) but they manifest nothing, excepting the obstinate *Folly*, and insolent *Provocation* of him that suffered; and sometimes the *Vices* and *Passions* of those by whom he suffered. (2.) The *Judgments*, which he says, beset the Enemies of him and his Doctrine. Some of these Pretences prove nothing; and others of them need be proved themselves.

And now I desire (if any doubt the truth of what I have said) that they would read *George Fox* his *Journal*,



as I have done, and see if what I affirm of him, and his Doctrine, be not found there. I think no man can *Expose* this Sect so much as *George Fox* his *Journal* exposeth it: And therefore, because I believe *Quakerism* to be a *dangerous and wicked Imposture*, I desire men would read the History of its *Author*. And let not any who call themselves *Friends*, count me their *Enemy*, for really I am not such, but do heartily pity them as *Religious Madmen*; and never did them any harm, and am resolved I never will.

I would *expostulate* with *Them*, out of compassion to their Souls, but that they seem so desperately *conceited* and *prejudiced*, that it must be in vain. God grant them the *true Light* of Religious Knowledge, and Wisdom, that they may see the error of their way, and be converted to the acknowledgment of the Truth as it is in *Jesus*.

And as for Those who are not yet of this Persuasion, But think *favourably* of it; I exhort them, in the fear of God, (1.) Never to part with the *Use of their Reason* in the *study of Religion*, where there is the best Exercise, and the greatest Need of it. And (2.) never to think, that what God has *Reveal'd* (or made known) in, and by the *Scriptures of Truth*, cannot be understood (or cannot be known) without a *repeated Revelation* (*i. e.* unless it be made known again.) We are sure there is no such Revelation *now*, and that all pretences to it (such as *George Fox* made) are *Imposture*. The good God deliver his Church from *this*, and from all other *Impostures*, and make men thoroughly *sensible*, that to ascribe their *own* wild and foolish *Imaginations* to the Spirit of God, has in it the Nature of *Blasphemy*.

I am

Your Friend and Servant.



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